

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-10.

11. (New) A biodegradable polymer for thermoforming rigid packaging products according to claim 11 having the composition:

- a) 8 to 80% of a starch modified to include a hydroxyalkyl C₂₋₆ group or modified by reaction with an anhydride of a carboxylic acid,
- b) 4 to 11% of a water soluble polymer selected from polyvinylacetate and polyvinyl alcohol,
- c) up to 12% added water,
- d) 0 to 10% of a polyol plasticizer,
- e) 0.1 to 1.5% of a C₁₂₋₂₂ fatty acid or salt,
- f) the balance being a natural starch.

12. (New) A composition as claimed in claim 11 wherein component e) comprises stearic acid.

13. (New) A composition as claimed in claim 11 wherein component b) comprises a polyvinyl alcohol component.

14. (New) A composition as claimed in claim 11 wherein the polyol plasticizer comprises glycerol.

15. (New) A composition as claimed in claim 11 wherein the polyol plasticizer content is zero and added water is from 10 to 12%.

16. (New) A polymer product as claimed in claim 20 further comprising stearic acid.
17. (New) A composition as claimed in claim 21 comprising polyvinyl alcohol.
18. (New) A process for forming products according to claim 11 comprising:
 - a) forming a mixture of starch, a modified starch, a water soluble polymer or copolymer containing vinyl alcohols units, up to 20% of added water and a polyol plasticizer and 0.4 to 1.5% by weight of a C₁₂₋₂₂ fatty acid or salt;
 - b) working the mixture and forming a melt within the temperature range of 130°C to 160°C, and
 - c) reducing the temperature and further working the mixture and then extruding the mixture or injecting the mixture into a mold at a temperature of 85°C to 105°C without the need to remove water.
19. (New) A process for forming products as claimed in claim 18 wherein the polymer is extruded into a sheet and subsequently thermoformed into a packaging tray.
20. (New) A biodegradable polymer product suitable for use in thermoforming rigid packaging products, said polymer comprising: a) 8-80% starch modified to include a hydroxyalkyl C₂₋₆ group or modified by reaction with an anhydride of a carboxylic acid; b) 4-11% of a water soluble polymer comprising polyvinylacetate and/or polyvinyl alcohol; c) up to 12% added water; d) 0-10% polyol plasticizer.
21. (New) A biodegradable polymer product as claimed in claim 20, wherein d is substantially 0%.